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RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 0960
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON 0804
RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA 0426
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DAKAR 001463

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TAGS: [EFIN](#) [SNAR](#) [PREL](#) [PU](#)
SUBJECT: GUINEA BISSAU: AMBASSADOR FOCUSES ON DRUGS,
COOPERATION IN FAREWELL

Classified By: Ambassador Janice L. Jacobs for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

1. (C) The Ambassador visited Bissau to cut the ribbon on the soon-to-be-opened office space and say good-bye in her final trip as Ambassador to Guinea-Bissau. She found a country that is earning the trust of donors and cleaning up its finances. At the same time, it is losing ground in the fight against drug trafficking and does not seem to have noticed it needs to start a fight against drug addiction.
END SUMMARY.

GOOD NEWS ON FINANCIAL FRONT

2. (C) Prime Minister Martinio N'Dafa Cabi told the Ambassador that his Government has made positive steps toward financial stability. He noted that all accounts had been centralized to facilitate transparency. Paying civil servant salaries is still a priority for the GOGB and even though it just paid two months worth of back wages, there are still four months of arrears. Only once that has been accomplished can reforms be tackled, said Cabi, such as restructuring and reducing the civil service. President Joao Bernardo "Nino" Vieira reiterated that salaries were the biggest financial challenge.

3. (C) Budget Director Romao Varela told Poloff at a reception to celebrate the imminent opening of the Embassy's liaison office in Bissau that the Government will raise enough donations to cover its 2006-2007 budget gap. Contributions from the EU, Spain, China and notably Angola will help close the over USD 22 million shortfall. A balanced budget will qualify Guinea-Bissau for an IMF post-conflict assistance grant, an accomplishment the GOGB has been working toward since President Vieira took office on October 1, 2005.

BAD NEWS ON THE DRUG FRONT

4. (C) In a July 7 meeting with the Ambassador, PM Cabi responded to post, June 13 diplomatic note expressing concern over the firing of Judicial Police Chief Orlando da Silva. He noted that a response had just been sent to Dakar,

although it has not yet been received. The diplomatic note was leaked by a member of the GOGB and it has gotten considerable press play. Cabi's official explanation of da Silva's firing described a bureaucratic misstep. He also noted that drug trafficking is extremely dangerous business in Bissau and without international support the country will make little progress. A replacement for da Silva has still not been named.

15. (C) The Ambassador explained the Major's List to Cabi and said Guinea-Bissau was in danger of making the list as a drug transit country when the interagency panel convened next year -- a step which would impact our ability to provide aid. She urged the GOGB to redouble efforts to make sure that does not happen and offered U.S. support if credible partners could be identified.

16. (C) Brazilian Ambassador Joao Cruz reached out to the Ambassador to find ways our countries could continue our cooperation in Guinea-Bissau to include fighting drug trafficking. He linked flagrant corruption and increasing concerns over security to drug trafficking. In fact, he is so concerned about security that he recently hired all new embassy guards and is now heightening the walls around his compound. His main frustration is echoed frequently among the diplomatic corps in Bissau and Dakar: if material support is provided to the GOGB, what assurances are there that it will not be used by police or military to facilitate drug trafficking?

17. (C) Cruz suggested targeting law breakers in Bissau through deportation or extradition. He noted, however, that approach would require strong partners in the police force

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and judiciary and it is not clear at this point who those would be. Another difficulty is the country's lack of a prison. Vieira told the Ambassador that a prison is a priority to fight drug trafficking in earnest.

18. (U) Trafficking through Guinea-Bissau is not the country's only drug problem. More and more, consumption is affecting the population. To raise the profile of the issue, the Ambassador and a reporter from Kansare, a Bissau newspaper, visited the country's only addiction treatment center just outside the capital. Pastor Domingos Te, who runs the church-sponsored center, said crack use never existed a few years ago but at least 10 of his 50 enrollees admit to crack addiction. A crack addict interviewed by the Ambassador said a gram of cocaine a few years ago cost about USD 140 (70,000 CFA). Today, because of the widespread availability, it has dropped to about USD 16 (8,000 CFA). He said it can be gotten in any neighborhood in Bissau and many of his acquaintances are users and dealers.

COMMENT

19. (C) Guinea-Bissau seems headed in two directions at once. This Government has garnered the trust of international donors in a way the previous government never did. Financial transparency and counter-corruption measures, as well as the removal of corrupt former Finance Minister Victor Mandinga, have contributed to the success. At the same time, there does not seem to be any champion left in the GOGB to fight drug trafficking. Cabi seems to be sincere and have the nation's best interest at heart, but his comment about the dangerousness of trafficking may have been an acknowledgement that he has no backing to fight the likes of kingpins like Interior Minister Baciro Dabo or members of the military.

110. (C) With technical assistance on hold until credible partners can be identified in the police, our emphasis on drugs needs to shift toward broader engagement. We will continue to raise the specter of the Major's list and we will work with Dakar- and Bissau-based diplomats and the UNODC on the creation of a mini-Dublin group for West Africa.

INL support for the UNODC,s upcoming program in Bissau to monitor and report on drug trafficking will be a centerpiece of our assistance. END COMMENT.

11. Visit Embassy Dakar's SIPRNet Web site at <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/af/dakar>.
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